

Veterans

How can I contact the Dept. of Veterans Affairs?

Go to www.va.gov . This website contains links to the following topics.

1. Health Care
1. Health Benefits and Services
2. VA Organizations and Programs
3. Facility Locator
4. ChampVA
5. Pharmacy Benefits

6. Benefits
1. Compensation & Pension
2. Education
3. Home Loans
4. Life Insurance
5. Vocational Rehabilitation

6. Burials and Memorials
1. Burial and Memorial Benefits
2. Nationwide Gravesite Locator
3. Cemeteries
4. Headstones and Markers

5. Board of Veterans Appeals
1. Pamphlet: Appeals Process
2. Customer Service
3. VA Forms
4. Search Decisions

5. Public Affairs
1. News Releases
2. Fact Sheets
3. Special Events

4. Congressional Affairs

1. VA Testimony
2. Veterans Legislation
3. Federal Regulations

4. Partners

1. Veterans Service Organizations
2. State Veterans Affairs Offices
3. Government Links

How do I contact the Personnel Record Center in St. Louis?

Go to www.archives.gov/st-louis . This website contains links to the following topics:

1. About Military Personnel Records

1. Address, Hours, and Contact Information
2. Visiting and On-site Research
3. Fire of 1973
4. Overview of Records
5. Customer Service

6. For the Public

1. Access to Records
2. FAQs
3. Replacing Awards and Decorations
4. Military Records Requests (SF-180s)

5. Other Resources

1. Helpful Military Websites
2. Genealogy
3. Research on Specific Wars

How do I submit a correction to my records?

The following forms are in PDF format. Even though the website is an US Army site; these

forms are Department of Defense forms used by all branches of the military for these actions.

1. Application for the Review of Discharge or Dismissal from the Armed Forces, DD Form 293 <http://arba.army.pentagon.mil/adrb.htm>
2. DD Form 149, Application for Correction of Military Record, DD Form 149 <http://arba.army.pentagon.mil/abcmr.htm>
3. Authorization for Disclosure of Medical or Dental Information, DD Form 2870 <http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/infomgt/forms/eforms/dd2870.pdf>
(This is not used to correct military medical records but to authorize the military to release them.)

Social Security

How to apply for disability benefits?

To apply for benefits, contact the Social Security Administration (SSA) at 1-800-772-1213. They have a TTY phone connection at 1-800-325-0778. You can ask SSA to send you the correct forms, and they can answer questions you may have.

In order to qualify for disability benefits, you must be unable to perform work of any kind and your disability must be expected to last at least one year or result in death. You must also have worked long enough (earned certain number of "credits") and recently enough under the Social Security System. The specific numbers depend on individual situations.

The SSA receives numerous applications for disability benefits. Because of the large volume of applications, it can take a long period of time to receive a decision. If your application is denied, you may appeal the decision. The first appeal will go to the local Office of Hearings and Appeals, will be heard by an Administrative Law Judge, and may take several months. If denied again and appealed, the second appeal will go to the Office of Hearings and Appeals in Virginia, and will take about two years to be decided.

If you receive disability benefits, the benefits won't begin until the sixth full month after the date the Social Security Administration decides the disability began. In addition, you must wait two years before you qualify for Medicare coverage.

How do I apply for Supplemental Security Income (SSI)?

To apply for benefits or to ask questions, contact the SSA at 1-800-772-1213. They have a TTY phone connections as well at 1-800-325-0778.

How do I apply for retirement benefits?

To apply for benefits or to get more information about the SSA retirement program, call 1-800-772-1213. They have a TTY phone connection as well at 1-800-325-0778.

In order to be eligible for retirement benefits, you have to have enough "credits" (10 years of work--you earn one credit per certain amount of money that you make) and have paid into Social Security.

You are eligible for SSA retirement benefits when you reach age 65 (however, beginning in 2003, the age at which you can apply for retirement benefits will increase gradually from 65 to 67), but you can apply early at age 62. If you apply early, the benefits you receive will be reduced, but you will receive them for a longer time.

The amount you receive depends on how much you earned when you were working.

You can also delay applying for Social Security retirement. If you do so, your extra income may increase your benefit amount, and you will receive a credit. To find out more about credit you may receive, contact the Social Security Administration at 1-800-772-1213.

Internal Revenue Service

Housing

What is the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and what do they do?

[The Department of Housing and Urban Development](#) (HUD) is the Federal agency responsible for national policy and programs that address America's housing needs, that improve and develop the Nation's communities, and enforce fair housing laws. Although HUD administers many programs, its major functions may be grouped into six categories:

Insuring mortgages for single-family and multi-family dwellings, and extending loans for home improvement and for purchasing mobile homes

Channeling funds from investors into the mortgage industry through the Government National Mortgage Association

Making direct loans for construction or rehabilitation of housing projects for the elderly and handicapped

Providing Federal housing subsidies for low and moderate-income families

Providing grants to States and communities for community development activities; and

Promoting and enforcing fair housing and equal housing opportunities.

Is there a toll-free number I can call to find HUD-approved housing counseling agencies?

HUD has a toll-free housing counseling referral service that provides potential homebuyers, homeowners, and renters with the names and telephone numbers of their nearest HUD approved housing counseling agencies. Services provided by the agencies include: first time homebuyer information, mortgage default and delinquency counseling, reverse mortgage (HECM) counseling, financial management and property maintenance guidelines. potential homebuyers, homeowners, and renters with the names and telephone numbers of their nearest HUD approved housing counseling agencies. Services provided by the agencies include: first

time homebuyer information, mortgage default and delinquency counseling, reverse mortgage (HECM) counseling, financial management and property maintenance guidelines.

Toll-Free Housing Referral Service
1-800-569-4287
1-800-358-6216 (TDD)

Immigration

How do I become a U.S. Citizen?

Visit the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) website for information about download a ["Guide to Naturalization."](#) This 45-page booklet answers most questions you may have regarding citizenship. You must have Adobe Acrobat to access it.

You can visit the USCIS homepage [here](#) .

I recently filed for Naturalization or a Green Card with the USCIS. How long will that take?

If you would like Congressman Lee Terry to inquire about the status of your Naturalization or Green Card, fill out a [privacy release](#) and mail it to:

Congressman Lee Terry

11717 Burt Street, Ste. 106
Omaha, NE 68154
402-397-9944

I need a form from the USCIS, but the local office won't give me one. How do I get an USCIS form?

Forms are available for download from the USCIS website. You can request forms on the USCIS website be mailed to you by calling 1-800-870-FORM (3676).

I've tried calling the USCIS to ask a simple question, but can't get through. How do you call the USCIS?

You can also try the USCIS toll-free number for general questions: 1-800-375-5283.

Business and Immigration

The trend in immigration law over the last few years has provided more options for companies wanting to hire people not living in the U.S. The Nutshell Guide for Businesses Hiring Temporary Employees from Outside the U.S. is a handy reference. Also check the Procedures and Alternatives to Sponsoring an H-1B Specialty Worker fact sheet for more information about hiring people with special skills not readily available in the United States.

Passports

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[Passports](#) are obtained through the Passport Services Division of the Department of State. Through your local passport acceptance agent, usually at the Post Office, you can apply for a new passport, renew your old one, or do any of a number of things, including replacing a lost, stolen, or damaged passport, or adding new pages to your existing book.

U.S. Department of State
Main address:
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520
Main Switchboard:
202-647-4000
Hotline for American Travelers:
202-647-5225
Website:
http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html

Traveling Overseas

You've got your passport and you're ready to go on your trip, right? Not quite. You still have to check with the country or countries you'll be visiting to determine whether or not you'll need a visa. A visa is permission from a country to cross their borders and comes in the form of a stamp in your U.S. Passport. You usually have to mail your passport to the Embassy or

Consulate of the country you'll be visiting, so allow plenty of time to accomplish this. Also, check the State Department website for travel warning and consular information sheets that provide very helpful information about the country you plan on visiting. The State Department services website also contains very comprehensive information on all the services it provides both stateside and abroad. This includes crisis assistance for U.S. citizens living or traveling abroad, and various travel publications available on-line.

American Embassies and Consulates General

Many U.S. Diplomatic Missions abroad have information on-line. For those that don't, check the State Department's Key Officers of Foreign Service Posts for addresses, and phone and fax numbers for U.S. Embassies and Consulates throughout the world.

Passports in a hurry

Passports usually take from 30 to 40 days to issue. For a \$35.00 fee--plus the cost of 2-way overnight mail--you can "expedite" this process and receive your passport in 7 to 10 days.